

Fun In The Kitchen **Age-Appropriate Activities Your Children Can Do**

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1 Year Olds

- grab the rolling pin and let your toddler roll it across the floor
- wooden spoons are great for increasing your 1 year olds hand coordination (and they make great sounds too!)
- let your toddler play with the lids from your pots. It's like they have started their own little band!

2 Year Olds

- help mom wash fruits and vegetables.
- take a plastic juice container or pop container and fill it with rice or dried pasta, or even coins. Tape the top so your curious one is unable to get the lid off, and let them shake the container to make the loudest sounds. You can do several of these with varying amounts of rice, pasta, or coins and let them hear the difference.
- pretend mixing - get a small wire whisk and a plastic measuring cup and let your munchkin mix just like mommy or daddy.
- wipe the table - it's never to early to get help cleaning up. Have your little one wipe off the table. It may not be perfect, but it will make you both feel good knowing your child wants to help you.

3 Year Olds

- help you mix batter.
- pour measuring cup contents into a bowl.
- knead bread dough.
- practice shapes and colors - help your little one identify the shapes and colors of the ingredients you are using in your meal. This will make them feel completely involved in the meal preparation and more likely to eat the end product.

4 Year Olds

- choose a food at the store - take your child when you go grocery shopping. Let them pick one food each week (one they haven't tried before) and help them experiment with that food, using it a few times during the week in different meals. Start with fruits and veggies first since those seem to disappear from a child's diet at an early age.
- play the number game - make one meal a week with different numbers of foods. For example, make a lunch with a salami sandwich, carrots, and strawberries. Play a game and count...2 carrot sticks, 4 strawberries, 2 pieces of salami, 2 pieces of bread, and 1 slice of cheese.
- measure - let your child help you measure the amount you need for a recipe and start explaining fractions and let them see the different size measuring cups. It's never too early to start math skills.
- reading - read the recipe out loud to your child and walk through the step by step process. This really enforces the concept that in many life activities there are a series of steps to get to the end product.

5-6 Year Olds

- Let them prepare simple snacks by themselves - they will love to eat the fruits of their labor!
- Plan a snack schedule - get a calendar or a dry erase board and sit down with your child at the beginning of the week. Let him or her plan a daily healthy snack that he or she can make.
- Set the table - it doesn't have to look like Martha Stewart's house, but it gives your child a sense of responsibility.

7-10 Year Olds

- Read recipes - let your child read the entire recipe to you.
- Plan meals - sit down with your child and let him or her help you set the menu for the week, look through the recipes and help you make a grocery shopping list.
- Make meals - at this age, most children can make at least 1 dish to go with dinner. If you are making an easy meal, have him or her help you with the entire meal. They will be so pleased and will no doubt eat it up, knowing they helped make it.
- Do dishes - ah yes, this one might be a struggle because at this age your children know that doing dishes is a chore. However, if your child has been involved with the meal planning process and making the meal, he or she may clean up the dishes without a problem.

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